

April 5, 2023

Subject: Proposed Property Tax Increase

Dear Montgomery County Council,

I am writing to you as a concerned resident of Montgomery County to express my strong opposition to the proposed 10% increase in property tax rates. While I understand the council's aim to reform property taxes, this increase does not represent reform. Instead, it places an undue financial burden on homeowners and landlords in Montgomery County, who are still struggling to recover from the adverse effects of the pandemic.

As you are aware, funding the school system is crucial. However, circumventing the standard approval process by waiving unanimity risks undermining trust in our local government and further eroding public confidence in the council's decision-making. Additionally, implementing such a significant increase in property taxes during a period of economic weakness is unwise and counterproductive. This increase will affect both property owners and renters, as landlords may pass on the increased costs to their tenants in the form of higher rent unless it is the plan to limit rent increases in the County in perpetuity.

Moreover, some areas of Montgomery County have experienced property assessment increases in excess of 30%. Now, certain council members want to further burden homeowners with this tax increase, which is unfair. Home insurance premiums have also been skyrocketing in the DMV, including Montgomery County, with our family experiencing a 30% increase in the last few years. It is worth noting that the economic prognosis for both the country and the county is grim, and there have been three bank failures in the country within the past few weeks. Therefore, implementing a property tax increase now is terrible timing.

It is also essential to consider that our neighboring jurisdictions, such as Fairfax County, are working to lower property taxes in response to the current economic challenges. This disparity in tax policies may result in residents and businesses choosing to relocate to areas with lower property taxes, negatively impacting Montgomery County's economic growth, reducing the tax base, and further straining our public services. This outcome is contrary to Marc Elrich's promises during the primary and election and his victory speech.

I urge you to vote AGAINST County Executive Marc Elrich's proposal. By working collaboratively with stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and community members, the council can identify innovative solutions to fund our schools without relying solely on increasing property taxes. The burden of this tax increase on homeowners and landlords will undoubtedly result in lower homeownership among less well-off constituents, increased inequality, and more significant gentrification for those unable to keep up with rising costs, exacerbating economic and social inequality.

In conclusion, I request that you reconsider the proposed 10% property tax increase and advocate for alternative, more equitable, and sustainable solutions to meet our school system's funding needs. I appreciate your attention to this matter and thank you for your continued service to the community.

I would also like to specifically thank councilmember Luedtke who was the only councilmember who directly responded to my email. Councilmember Friedson whose District I am a resident of never responded to my numerous emails and was unwilling to state in writing any view (for/against) on the proposed tax increase.

Sincerely,

Harisch Sood

**Fairfax lowers property tax 2024- LINK**

[https://patch.com/virginia/mclean/s/im9eq/lower-real-estate-tax-rate-expected-in-adopted-fairfax-co-2024-budget?utm\\_term=article-slot-2&utm\\_source=newsletter-daily&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&user\\_email=444b4b84015edf03c208306a3731f69f3ed9dda0fa25e17ad667123744c98192](https://patch.com/virginia/mclean/s/im9eq/lower-real-estate-tax-rate-expected-in-adopted-fairfax-co-2024-budget?utm_term=article-slot-2&utm_source=newsletter-daily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter&user_email=444b4b84015edf03c208306a3731f69f3ed9dda0fa25e17ad667123744c98192)